



# NOAA

NATIONAL OCEANIC AND  
ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE



**Contact:** Christine Brammer  
(808) 224-6444

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**Global ocean drifter deployed off of Maui, Hawai'i**  
*Hawai'i among six NOAA Earth Day drifter sites*

Earth Day continues on Maui as area students and teachers from Baldwin High School and Kihei Charter School deployed a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) ocean drifter today from a Trilogy Excursions vessel that departed from Lahaina Harbor. The drifter will contribute to a global ocean drifter array that provides climate and other environmental data vital to helping track hurricanes, ocean pollutants, species migration and marine debris.

"The Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary is excited to be a part of this important program that involves students in real-world science aimed at better understanding the ocean," said Malia Chow, sanctuary superintendent. "Today's deployment is the second of its kind in Hawai'i, the first of which occurred in November of 2011. With these continued efforts to get students involved we hope to inspire the next generation of ocean stewards and scientists."

"We're extremely proud of our students. One student from each selected class won a prize in NOAA's Adopt A Drifter contest, which gives students across the country and the world the chance to learn about our environment right in their classrooms, and with the same near real time data that ocean and climate scientists use," said Lisa Davis, Science Facilitator for Kihei Charter School.

"Trilogy Excursions was proud to support this effort that contributes to learning more about the ocean, both locally and globally," said Jim Coon, owner of Trilogy Excursions. "Trilogy Excursions continually gives back to the ocean by supporting local marine conservation initiatives and we were happy to support the sanctuary and NOAA with this effort that involved local students."

NOAA's Adopt a Drifter Program enables students to learn about the essential role the ocean plays in earth's climate and weather and our own living conditions. Schools "adopt" a drifter equipped with climate sensors. As the drifter, or 44-pound floating ocean buoy, moves in the ocean currents, it measures and transmits sea surface temperature by satellite. The currents carry heat from place to place, which affects climate. Each drifter is part of a global ocean array that students can follow online, along with the particular drifter they adopted.

Drifters help forecast the path of approaching hurricanes, predict the movement of ocean pollutants, and track the migration of many species. And while satellite technology makes sea surface temperature measurements possible from space, drifters are needed to ensure these measurements are accurate. Without drifter observations to correct satellite measurements, these measurements can err due to dust and other elements in the atmosphere.

Student drifter events marking Earth Day are also occurring this month in Boston, Miami, Mobile, Ala., Seattle, and Channel Islands/Santa Barbara.

The sanctuary is administered by a partnership of NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries and the State of Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources. The sanctuary works to protect humpback whales through research, education, conservation and stewardship.

NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and marine resources. Join us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and our other [social media channels](#).

**On the Web:**

Adopt a Drifter Program Earth Day: <http://www.adp.noaa.gov/earthday/>

NOAA's Earth Day: <http://www.noaa.gov/earthday/>

Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary:

<http://hawaiihumpbackwhale.noaa.gov>

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